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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Third Committee (A/63/425)]

63/159. Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Recalling its previous resolutions on the question, including resolution 62/137 of 18 December 2007,

Deeply convinced that the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action[1] and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"[2] are important contributions to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women, and must be translated into effective action by all States, the United Nations system and other organizations concerned,

Reaffirming the commitments to gender equality and the advancement of women made at the Millennium Summit,[3] the 2005 World Summit[4] and other major United Nations summits, conferences and special sessions, and reaffirming also that their full, effective and accelerated implementation are integral to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals,

Welcoming progress made towards achieving gender equality, but stressing that challenges and obstacles remain in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session,

Recognizing that the responsibility for the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session rests primarily at the national level and that strengthened efforts are necessary in this respect, and reiterating that enhanced international cooperation is essential for full, effective and accelerated implementation,

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[1] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

[2] Resolution S-23/2, annex, and resolution S-23/3, annex.

[3] See resolution 55/2.

[4] See resolution 60/1.

Welcoming the work of the Commission on the Status of Women in reviewing the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and noting with appreciation the agreed conclusions on financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women, adopted by the Commission at its fifty-second session,[5]

Reaffirming that gender mainstreaming is a globally accepted strategy for promoting the empowerment of women and achieving gender equality by transforming structures of inequality, and reaffirming also the commitment to actively promote the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres, as well as the commitment to strengthen the capabilities of the United Nations system in the area of gender equality,

Bearing in mind the challenges and obstacles to changing discriminatory attitudes and gender stereotypes, and stressing that challenges and obstacles remain in the implementation of international standards and norms to address the inequality between men and women,

Expressing serious concern that the urgent goal of 50/50 gender balance in the United Nations system, especially at senior and policymaking levels, with full respect for the principle of equitable geographical distribution, in conformity with Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations, remains unmet, and that the representation of women in the United Nations system has remained almost static, with negligible improvement in some parts of the system, and in some cases has even decreased, as reflected in the report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women in the United Nations system,[6]

Acknowledging its resolution 62/277 of 15 September 2008, in particular its gender-specific provisions, and in this context encouraging the ongoing work on gender equality and the empowerment of women,

Reaffirming the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding,

Reaffirming also the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS[7] and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS adopted at the High-level Meeting on HIV/AIDS, held from 31 May to 2 June 2006,[8] which, inter alia, acknowledged the feminization of the pandemic,

Noting with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the United Nations system,[9]

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the Secretary-General on the measures taken and progress achieved in follow-up to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly;[10]

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[5] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2008, Supplement No. 7* (E/2008/27), chap. I, sect. A; see also Economic and Social Council decision 2008/235.

[6] A/63/364.

[7] Resolution S-26/2, annex.

[8] Resolution 60/262, annex.

[9] E/2008/53.

[10] A/63/217.

2. *Reaffirms* the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women,[1] the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly,[2] and the declaration adopted on the occasion of the ten-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at the forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women,[11] and also reaffirms its commitment to their full, effective and accelerated implementation;

3. *Recognizes* that the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the fulfilment of the obligations of States parties under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women[12] are mutually reinforcing in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women, and in this regard welcomes the contributions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to promoting the implementation of the Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session, and invites States parties to the Convention to include information on measures taken to enhance implementation at the national level in their reports to the Committee under article 18 of the Convention;

4. *Calls upon* Governments, the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations, and all sectors of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, as well as all women and men, to fully commit themselves and to intensify their contributions to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session;

5. *Calls upon* States parties to comply fully with their obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Optional Protocol thereto[13] and to take into consideration the concluding comments as well as the general recommendations of the Committee, urges States parties to consider limiting the extent of any reservations that they lodge to the Convention, to formulate any reservations as precisely and narrowly as possible, and to regularly review such reservations with a view to withdrawing them so as to ensure that no reservation is incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention, also urges all Member States that have not yet ratified or acceded to the Convention to consider doing so, and calls upon those Member States that have not yet done so to consider signing, ratifying or acceding to the Optional Protocol;

6. *Encourages* all actors, inter alia, Governments, the United Nations system, other international organizations and civil society, to continue to support the work of the Commission on the Status of Women in fulfilling its central role in the follow-up to and review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session, and, as applicable, to carry out its recommendations, and welcomes in this regard the revised programme and methods of work of the Commission adopted at its fiftieth session,[14] which give particular attention to the sharing of experiences, lessons

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[11] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2005, Supplement No. 7* and corrigendum (E/2005/27 and Corr.1), chap. I, sect. A; see also Economic and Social Council decision 2005/232.

[12] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

[13] Ibid., vol. 2131, No. 20378.

[14] See Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/9.

learned and good practices in overcoming challenges to full implementation at the national and international levels as well as to the evaluation of progress in the implementation of priority themes;

7. *Calls upon* Governments, and the relevant funds and programmes, organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates, and invites the international financial institutions and all relevant actors of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, to intensify action to achieve the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session, through, inter alia:

(*a*) Sustained political will and commitment at the national, regional and international levels to take further action, inter alia, through the mainstreaming of gender perspectives, including through the development and use of gender equality indicators, as applicable, in all policies and programmes and the promotion of full and equal participation and empowerment of women, and enhanced international cooperation;

(*b*) Promotion and protection of, and respect for, the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by women and girls, including through the full implementation by States of their obligations under all human rights instruments, especially the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;

(*c*) Ensuring full representation and full and equal participation of women in political, social and economic decision-making as an essential condition for gender equality, and the empowerment of women and girls as a critical factor in the eradication of poverty;

(*d*) Involving women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels, integrating gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development, and strengthening or establishing mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impact on women of development and environmental policies and strategies, including those related to climate change, deforestation and desertification;

(*e*) Integrating a gender perspective into the design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of national environmental policies, strengthening mechanisms and providing adequate resources to ensure full and equal participation of women in decision-making at all levels on environmental issues, in particular on strategies related to the impact of climate change on the lives of women and girls;

(*f*) Enhancing the role of women at all levels and in all aspects of rural development, agriculture, nutrition and food security, including by ensuring legislation and administrative reforms, including access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, credit, inheritance, natural resources and new technology;

(*g*) Providing technical assistance to women, particularly in developing countries, to ensure the continuing promotion of human resources development and the development of environmentally sound technologies and of women's entrepreneurship;

(*h*) Respect for the rule of law, including legislation, and continued efforts to repeal laws and eradicate policies and practices that discriminate against women and girls, and to adopt laws and promote practices that protect their rights;

(*i*) Strengthening the role of national institutional mechanisms for gender equality and the advancement of women, including through financial and other appropriate assistance, to increase their direct impact on women;

(*j*) Undertaking socio-economic policies that promote sustainable development and ensure poverty eradication programmes, especially for women and girls, and strengthening the provision of and ensuring equal access to adequate, affordable and accessible public and social services, including education and training at all levels, as well as to all types of permanent and sustainable social protection/social security systems for women throughout their life cycle, and supporting national efforts in this regard;

(*k*) Promoting and supporting increased access for all women and girls to information and communication technology, particularly women and girls living in poverty, and women and girls living in rural and remote areas and in disadvantaged situations, and enhancing international support to overcome the digital divide among countries and regions, and between women and men and girls and boys;

(*l*) Taking further steps to ensure that the education system and the media, to the extent consistent with freedom of expression, support the use of non-stereotypic, balanced and diverse images of women presenting them as key actors of the process of development as well as promoting non-discriminatory roles of women and men in their private and public life;

(*m*) Ensuring women's and girls' full and equal access to all levels of quality education and training, while ensuring progressively and on the basis of equal opportunities that primary education is compulsory, accessible and available free to all;

(*n*) Incorporating gender perspectives and human rights in health-sector policies, programmes and research activities, paying attention to women's and girls' specific needs and priorities, ensuring women's right to the highest attainable standards of health and their access to affordable and adequate health-care services, including sexual, reproductive and maternal health care and lifesaving obstetric care, in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,[15] and recognizing that the lack of economic empowerment and independence has increased women's vulnerability to a range of negative consequences, involving the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other poverty-related diseases;

(*o*) Eliminating gender inequalities, gender-based abuse and violence, increasing the capacity of women and adolescent girls to protect themselves from the risk of HIV infection, principally through the provision of health care and services, including sexual and reproductive health, and the provision of full access to comprehensive information and education; ensuring that women can exercise their right to have control over, and decide freely and responsibly on, matters related to their sexuality in order to increase their ability to protect themselves from HIV infection, including their sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion,

[15] *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5–13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

discrimination and violence; and taking all necessary measures to create an enabling environment for the empowerment of women and to strengthen their economic independence, while, in this context, reiterating the importance of the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality;

(*p*) Strengthening national health and social infrastructures to reinforce measures to promote women's access to public health and taking action at the national level to address shortages of human resources for health by, inter alia, developing, financing and implementing policies, within national development strategies, to improve training and management and effectively govern the recruitment, retention and deployment of health workers, including through international cooperation in this area;

(*q*) Adequate mobilization of resources at the national and international levels, as well as new and additional resources for the developing countries, including the least developed countries and countries with economies in transition, from all available funding mechanisms, including multilateral, bilateral and private sources;

(*r*) Increased partnerships among Governments, civil society and the private sector;

(*s*) Encouraging joint responsibility of men and boys with women and girls in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, based on the conviction that this is essential to the achievement of the goals of gender equality and the empowerment of women, development and peace;

(*t*) Removing structural and legal barriers, as well as eliminating stereotypic attitudes, to gender equality at work, promoting equal pay for equal work or work of equal value and promoting the recognition of the value of women's unremunerated work, as well as developing and promoting policies that facilitate the reconciliation of employment and family responsibilities;

8. *Reaffirms* that States have an obligation to exercise due diligence to prevent violence against women and girls, provide protection to the victims and investigate, prosecute and punish the perpetrators of violence against women and girls, and that failure to do so violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms, and calls upon Governments to elaborate and implement laws and strategies to eliminate violence against women and girls;

9. *Welcomes* the adoption of Security Council resolution 1820 (2008) on 19 June 2008;

10. *Calls upon* Governments, in this regard, to promote awareness and information campaigns on women's rights and the responsibility to respect them, including in rural areas, and to encourage men and boys to speak out strongly against violence against women;

11. *Strongly encourages* Governments to continue to support the role and contribution of civil society, in particular non-governmental organizations and women's organizations, in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session;

12. *Resolves* to intensify the efforts of its Main Committees and subsidiary bodies to fully mainstream a gender perspective in their work, including by paying more attention to issues related to the status of women under their consideration and within their mandates, as well as in all United Nations summits, conferences and special sessions and in their follow-up processes;

13. *Requests* that reports of the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies systematically address gender perspectives through qualitative gender analysis and, where available, quantitative data, in particular through concrete conclusions and recommendations for further action on gender equality and the advancement of women, in order to facilitate gender-sensitive policy development;

14. *Urges* Governments and all entities of the United Nations system, including United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, and all relevant actors of civil society, to ensure the integration of gender perspectives in the implementation of and follow-up to all United Nations summits, conferences and special sessions and to give attention to gender perspectives in preparation for such events, including the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus in Doha in 2008;

15. *Reaffirms its call* to include a gender perspective in the consideration of all issues in the agenda and activities of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council;

16. *Encourages* the Economic and Social Council to continue its efforts to ensure that gender mainstreaming is an integral part of its work and that of its subsidiary bodies, through, inter alia, implementation of its agreed conclusions 1997/2 of 18 July 1997[16] and its resolution 2004/4 of 7 July 2004;

17. *Welcomes* the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2008 of the Economic and Social Council,[17] which, inter alia, reaffirmed the commitment to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women, recognizing that they are key actors in development, and to identifying and accelerating concrete actions towards that end;

18. *Requests* all bodies that deal with programme and budgetary matters, including the Committee for Programme and Coordination, to ensure that programmes, plans and budgets visibly mainstream gender perspectives;

19. *Reaffirms* the primary and essential role of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, as well as the central role of the Commission on the Status of Women, in promoting the advancement of women and gender equality;

20. *Requests* the Economic and Social Council to continue to encourage its functional commissions to mainstream a gender perspective in their respective follow-up actions to major United Nations conferences and summits and to develop more effective means to ensure the implementation of outcomes on gender equality at the national level, including through increased consultation with the Commission on the Status of Women;

21. *Underlines* the catalytic role played by the Commission on the Status of Women, as well as the important role played by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, in promoting and monitoring gender mainstreaming within the United Nations system;

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[16] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/52/3/Rev.1), chap. IV, para. 4.

[17] See A/63/3, chap. IV, sect. F, para. 119. For the final text, see *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 3*.

22. *Requests* that the entities of the United Nations system systematically incorporate the outcomes of the Commission on the Status of Women into their work within their mandates, inter alia, to ensure effective support for the efforts of Member States towards the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women;

23. *Reaffirms* the commitment made at the 2005 World Summit to the full and effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) of 31 October 2000, while noting the eighth anniversary of its adoption and the open debates in the Council on women and peace and security, and encourages Governments to ensure systematic attention to, recognition of and support for the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding efforts;

24. *Urges* Governments and the United Nations system to take further steps to ensure the integration of a gender perspective and the full and equal participation of women in all efforts to promote peace and security, including in peace negotiations, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and post-conflict situations, as well as to increase their role in decision-making at all levels, including through the development of national action plans and strategies;

25. *Calls upon* all parts of the United Nations system to continue to play an active role in ensuring the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session, through, inter alia, the work of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women and the maintenance of gender specialists in all entities of the United Nations system, as well as by ensuring that all personnel, especially in the field, receive training and appropriate follow-up, including tools, guidance and support, for accelerated gender mainstreaming, and reaffirms the need to strengthen the capabilities of the United Nations system in the area of gender;

26. *Requests* the Secretary-General to review and redouble his efforts to make progress towards achieving the goal of 50/50 gender balance at all levels in the Secretariat and throughout the United Nations system, with full respect for the principle of equitable geographical distribution, in conformity with Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations, considering, in particular, women from developing and least developed countries, from countries with economies in transition and from unrepresented or largely underrepresented Member States, and to ensure managerial and departmental accountability with respect to gender balance targets, and strongly encourages Member States to identify and regularly submit more women candidates for appointment to positions in the United Nations system, especially at more senior and policymaking levels;

27. *Encourages* the subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly to incorporate gender-equality perspectives systematically in their discussions and outcomes, including through effective use of the analysis, data and recommendations contained in reports of the Secretary-General, and to follow up on the outcomes;

28. *Requests* that reports of the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly facilitate gender-sensitive policy development by more systematically including qualitative gender analysis, data and recommendations for further action;

29. *Calls upon* the United Nations system to continue its efforts towards achieving the goal of gender balance, including with the active support of gender focal points, and requests the Secretary-General to provide an oral report to the

Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-third and fifty-fourth sessions, to report to the General Assembly on a biennial basis, beginning at its sixty-fifth session, under the item entitled "Advancement of women", and to include in his report on human resources management information on the status of women in the United Nations system, including on progress made and obstacles encountered in achieving gender balance, recommendations for accelerating progress, and up-to-date statistics, including the number and percentage of women and their functions and nationalities throughout the United Nations system, and information on the responsibility and accountability of the Office of Human Resources Management of the Secretariat and the secretariat of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination for promoting gender balance;

30. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to report annually to the General Assembly under the item entitled "Advancement of women", as well as to the Commission on the Status of Women and the Economic and Social Council, on the follow-up to and progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session, with an assessment of progress in gender mainstreaming, including information on key achievements, lessons learned and good practices, and recommendations on further measures to enhance implementation.

70th plenary meeting
18 December 2008